

# editorial

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Art criticism and ecological studies, our two special sections in this issue, are not normally the province of cultural studies, but the way in which these sections were set up and developed indicates that these areas should be central to the concerns of the discipline.

Our ‘Indigenous art’ section, facilitated by Jennifer Biddle and Robyn Ferrell, does not broach this topic from an art history or theory framework. The writers—Jennifer Biddle, Barbara Bolt, Linnell Secomb, Christine Nicholls and Roslyn Diprose—focus on some paintings by Central Desert artist Kathleen Petyarre, particularly the ‘Mountain Devil Lizard’ series. The analyses engage not only with the paintings but also with issues of landscape, country and gender. The ethnography of the breast, the cross-cultural possibilities of the abstract, the phenomenology of the Dreaming and the aura of painting are all canvassed in ways that open up Petyarre’s work so that the moment of visual encounter is no longer primary. The engagement of these scholars with an Indigenous artist’s work is, in some respects, a new version of the cultural studies conjuncture of the 1970s and 1980s when ‘we’ seemed to be much more inspired by the world of art. If this seems more attenuated now since the turn towards a more instrumentalist and policy-oriented cultural studies on the one hand, and a traditional fascination with the ‘new’ of new media arts on the other, then this section is a timely return.

Eco-criticism and the eco-humanities are, by contrast, much newer friends for cultural studies researchers. Isabelle Stengers’s article, ‘Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices’ (which we published last year in vol. 11, no. 1) is, we think, a major philosophical statement. Another line of inquiry was prefigured much earlier by Gay Hawkins editing the *UTS*

*Review's* special issue on *Waste* (vol. 7, no. 1, 2001). Deborah Rose, a key figure in both indigenous and eco-humanities debates, puts the two sections in conversation. The guest editors, Heather Kerr and Emily Potter, have selected papers from a conference they held (with Robyn Tucker) at the Art Gallery of South Australia in July 2005, 'Environments and Ecologies in an Expanded Field'. It addressed the urgent need to re-evaluate relationships between the human and the environmental, the cultural and the ecological, the technical and the natural. Here they showcase cultural studies work—and again, the work of artists—that vitally engages with the ethics, aesthetics and politics of ecologies and environments. Featured are writing by Martin Harrison and Katrina Schlunke, an artist's talk by Janet Laurence, and essays by Deborah Rose, Ross Gibson, Gay Hawkins and Emily Potter, Paul Carter, and Devleena Ghosh and Stephen Muecke. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Adelaide, is to be thanked for funding the conference via a Strategic Initiatives Grant.

In New Writing Keri Glastonbury reflects on contemporary Australian painter Adam Cullen and poet Ted Nielsen, while Michael Farrell creates a Melbourne beach poetics. Amanda Lohrey and John Frow contribute to Provocations, and Ruth Barcan offers a range of fine reviews.

The current editors would like to take this opportunity to make an announcement: *Cultural Studies Review* has entered a new and exciting phase. Stephen Muecke and Chris Healy retired from their positions at the end of 2005 to make way for John Frow (The University of Melbourne) and Katrina Schlunke (The University of Technology, Sydney). Stephen has been involved since the beginning, with Meaghan Morris, when the first *UTS Review* was produced just over eleven years ago, and in 2001 Chris took Meaghan's place, thus setting up the partnership with the University of Melbourne and Melbourne University Publishing and relaunching the journal as *Cultural Studies Review*. The literary editor, Amanda Lohrey, has also moved on. Amanda has been a joy to work with and we have been very lucky to rely on her excellent judgement. Our managing editor, Penny Johnson, is also turning to other things. Penny has provided us with a sure bedrock of expert editing, professional management and sustaining counsel over the last four years. We are enormously thankful for that work and wish her success in new ventures. Only Ruth Barcan will remain to hold the standard in book reviewing. Rest assured, the transition process has been under way for some time, as Chris Healy and Stephen Muecke have been showing the new editors the ropes. Beyond that, the outgoing editors will have no say in the direction the journal takes, since we will hold the incoming editors only to the promise of a 'new and exciting phase' in the history of the journal with which we are proud to be associated.